

Friday, April 28, 2006

NTSB Calls for Changes in the FAA's Aircraft Design Certification Process



In a report adopted at a public meeting on April 25, the Board recommended measures to improve the process used by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to evaluate safety-critical systems on transport-category aircraft.

"This is a valuable report that goes to the heart of our air safety system," said NTSB Acting Chairman Mark V. Rosenker. "If we are to maintain and improve our safety record, we must be sure to learn from the tragic accidents in the past."

The report considered lessons learned about certification issues for four major accidents investigated by the Board between 1994 and 2001, which, collectively, accounted for 60 percent of the air carrier fatalities during that period.

Overall, the Board found that the FAA's certification process was sound and produced a high level of safety. However, the Board made three recommendations for improving the process. These recommendations addressed documenting the identification of safety-critical systems, ensuring that the identification process includes evaluation of structural failures and human/airplane system interaction failures, and assessing safety-critical systems throughout the life of the aircraft.

Member Hersman Tours Potomac Consolidated TRACON

Member Deborah Hersman toured the Potomac Consolidated Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) in Warrenton, Virginia, on Wednesday, April 19. She received a briefing and tour from air traffic controllers Scott Proudfoot and Chris Sutherland and met briefly with Barbara Cogliandro, the air traffic manager of the facility. Potomac Consolidated TRACON is one of the busiest TRACONs in the country, directing air traffic to and from Reagan National, Dulles, BWI, and Richmond International airports, as well as Andrews Air Force Base.

Member Ellen Engleman Conners Announces that She Will Leave the NTSB at the End of May



Member Ellen Engleman Conners, who served 2 years as the agency's Chairman, announced that she intends to leave the Safety Board on May 31. In her April 17 letter of resignation to President George W. Bush, Member Engleman Conners said the following: "With great humility and thankfulness, I tender my resignation as a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board effective May 31, 2006. I wish to thank you for your inspirational leadership and your patient devotion to our country during this most severe challenge to our freedoms. It has been a great privilege to serve in three positions in your administration. Your vision for America has been my guide."

Member Engleman Conners joined the Safety Board on March 24, 2003, when she began a 2-year term as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the agency. During her chairmanship, Member Engleman Conners successfully focused on reducing the number of open or non-implemented NTSB safety recommendations to the lowest number since 1975. Since the expiration of her chairmanship in March 2005, she has served as a Member of the NTSB.

Member Engleman Conners received a number of prestigious awards from industry organizations for her accomplishments, including Aviation Week's highest honor, the Aviation Laurel, for reducing the number of open recommendations. She also represented the Board as on-scene spokesperson at some of its most notable accidents in recent years, including the Staten Island ferry and the Baltimore water taxi accidents. We wish her well as she enters the next chapter of her life.

NTSB Acting Chairman Praises Two Marine Organizations for Actions to Ensure Safety on the Waterways

NTSB Acting Chairman Mark V. Rosenker, in a speech before the 8th Annual National Harbor Safety Committee Conference, applauded the actions taken by the U.S. Coast Guard and the United Kingdom's Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) to ensure transportation safety on waterways. During his speech, Acting Chairman Rosenker noted the steps that the Coast Guard was taking to address the issue of passenger weights and vessel stability, including the recent announcement in the *Federal Register* regarding the agency's commitment to a high-priority rulemaking to address this matter and, in the meantime, the implementation of an interim program to address the matter immediately. These actions are in response to Safety Board recommendations made last month resulting from the investigation of the accident involving the *Lady D*, a pontoon water taxi that capsized in Baltimore Harbor in March 2004.

Acting Chairman Rosenker's speech also noted that, this week, the MAIB announced urgent recommendations to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention concerning fire safety on passenger ships. These recommendations were the result of the investigation of a recent fire aboard the cruise ship *Star Princess*. The investigation is being conducted by the United Kingdom, and a Safety Board marine investigator is participating in the investigation.

In Memoriam, Chester "Chet" J. Szychliński



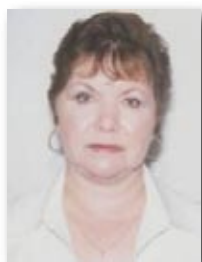
Chet Szychliński, a former accident investigator in the Office of Marine Safety, suffered a massive stroke on March 27, 2006, and died on March 30th at the age of 84.

Chet was a member of the class of 1944 of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

Upon graduation from the academy, he received a commission in the U.S. Navy and served honorably during World War II. During the war, Chet sailed on ships on the Murmansk run, bringing crucial supplies to Russia, and participated in the D-Day landings in Normandy. After the war, Chet left the Navy and entered private industry. He was recalled to active duty for the Korean War, during which he participated in the Inchon Landings. After leaving the Navy for a second time, he returned to private industry where he worked for many years, obtaining an unlimited Oceangoing Master's License.

In 1978, Chet accepted a position with the Safety Board as an accident investigator in the Office of Marine Safety. He served as IIC and/or report writer on many major marine accidents and was responsible for the development of many significant marine safety recommendations. He retired in 1993. After his wife passed away, he moved to the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, area to be near family. He remained active until his stroke.

Above is a photograph of Chet taken earlier this year at a Milwaukee area museum where he was displaying a ship model that he had constructed to a group of school children.



NTSB Welcomes New Special Assistant, Office of Member Higgins

Ms. Denise A. Daniels recently returned to the NTSB as Special Assistant in the Office of Member Higgins. Ms. Daniels resumed her employment with NTSB on April 24. We welcome her back to the Board.

